



Biodiversity Certification: Update

Biodiversity Certification has been granted over *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006* (the Growth Centres SEPP). This balances the protection and management of environmental areas with the efficient supply of land for urban development in Western Sydney. It is a first for New South Wales.

Biodiversity Certification will protect a minimum of 2,000 hectares of existing native vegetation in the Growth Centres. Landowners, Councils and developers will not have to look at biodiversity issues individually in Development Applications for Certified Areas.

Through Certification, \$530 million will be available to fund either the purchase of areas of existing native vegetation for the primary purpose of biodiversity conservation, or to enter into private conservation agreements both inside and outside the Growth Centres.

During 2008, a legal challenge helped clarify a number of aspects relating to the implementation of Biodiversity Certification.

This fact sheet explains these details and replaces the *Guide to Biodiversity Certification* released in December 2007. An updated *Guide* will soon be prepared with relevant maps.

Recent clarifications to Biodiversity Certification mean:

- Certification **only** takes effect once land in 'Certified Areas' in the Growth Centres Precincts is rezoned **under the Growth Centres SEPP**.
- For example, this means that, for the Certified Areas in Oran Park and Turner Road Precincts that were rezoned under the Growth Centres SEPP, the Certification has taken effect.
- From a practical perspective, this removes the need for a threatened species assessment to be undertaken for any Development Applications that are submitted in these areas under the Growth Centres SEPP.
- Biodiversity Certification **only applies to proposed developments or activities carried out under the Growth Centres SEPP**; it does not apply to work carried out under other environmental planning instruments such as Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) or other State Environmental Planning Policies, such as the Seniors Living SEPP. Any developments carried out on Biodiversity Certified land under other instruments **need to follow the normal assessment process** under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).
- This approach applies to **all Precincts rezoned for urban development under the Growth Centres SEPP**. As Edmondson Park Precinct in the South West, and Colebee Precinct in the North West were rezoned under relevant LEPs, appropriate action is being taken to ensure **these Precincts also benefit from certification**.